



**State of Wisconsin**  
**Department of Public Instruction**  
Elizabeth Burmaster, State Superintendent

**\*\*\*NEWS RELEASE\*\*\***

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**4K reaches more students**

*Enrollment jumps by 45 percent in five years under Burmaster*

MADISON—Student enrollment in 4-year-old kindergarten (4K) increased by 45 percent in the past five years, a trend State Superintendent Elizabeth Burmaster calls an important step in raising achievement for all students and closing the achievement gap.

“Our advocacy at the state level is truly paying off for 4K programming. Our New Wisconsin Promise recognizes 4K as one of the best first steps educators can take to raise achievement for all students and close the achievement gap, essentially stopping the gap before it begins,” Burmaster said. “I am delighted to see local communities embrace the 4K concept as an important component in the educational program they offer to their families and children.”

Enrollment in 4K climbed to 20,959 students for the current school year, up from 14,482 in the 2001-02 school year. Twenty-seven districts implemented 4K programs this school year, bringing the total to 234 districts that offer the program. In the 2001-02 school year just 166 districts offered 4K.

“We know that the vast majority of brain development takes place in the earliest years of a child’s life, and that the first five years lay the

foundation for all future social, emotional, and cognitive development,” Burmaster said. “Research studies support both the educational and economic value of 4-year-old kindergarten. Not only do 4K students do better in school, research shows there are fewer referrals for special education and students are more likely to graduate, meaning quality early childhood programs and 4-year-old kindergarten are an important step in closing the achievement gap and among the best investments we can make in our children and our economy.”

**Growth in 4K — 2001-02 to 2005-06**

School Year	Number of Districts	Number of Students
2001-02	166	14,483
2002-03	180	16,051
2003-04	189	16,957
2004-05	208	18,652
2005-06	234	20,959

(more)

Wisconsin is one of the few states in the nation that has a strong history of initiating formal education at the age of 4. The state's constitution calls for school districts to offer education "...free to all children between the ages of 4 and 20 years." Wisconsin's first public kindergarten opened in 1873, and beginning in 1927, the state provided aid to support 4-year-old kindergarten programs in local school districts.

Wisconsin is also a leader in pioneering ways to serve communities through collaborative approaches to 4K. Through collaborative approaches public school educators, child care providers, and Head Start programs work together to establish services for 4-year-old children.

"Early childhood programs prepare our youngsters to learn and to successfully negotiate the place we call school by bridging the effects of poverty, allowing economically disadvantaged children to gain an equal footing with their peers. Offering 4K programs makes sense to help our children get started early on the road to learning and becoming productive, contributing citizens," Burmaster said.

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**ATTACHMENT:** A list of districts that offer 4K programs follows. Those marked with an asterisk (\*) implemented 4K in the 2005-06 school year.

# Districts with 4-Year-Old Kindergarten Programs

Abbotsford	Elkhart Lake-	Manitowoc	Riverdale
Adams-Friendship Area	Glenbeulah	Maple Dale-Indian Hill	Rosendale-Brandon
Albany	Elmwood	Marathon City	Rosholt
Algoma	Erin	Marinette	Royall
Alma	Fall River	Marion	Saint Francis
Alma Center	Fennimore Community	Marshall	Seneca
Amery	Flambeau	* Mauston	Sevastopol
Arcadia	Florence	Medford Area	Sharon J11
Argyle	Fond du Lac	Mellen	Shawano-Gresham
Athens	Fontana J8	* Melrose-Mindoro	Sheboygan Area
Auburndale	Fox Point J2	Menasha	Shell Lake
Augusta	* Frederic	Mercer	Shiocton
Barneveld	Freedom Area	Merton Community	Shorewood
Barron Area	Geneva J4	Milwaukee	Shullsburg
Beaver Dam	Gilman	Mineral Point	* Silver Lake
Beecher-Dunbar-Pembin	Gilmanton	Mishicot	Slinger
Belmont Community	Glendale-River Hills	Mondovi	Solon Springs
Benton	Glenwood City	Monona Grove	Somerset
Birchwood	Glidden	* Monroe	South Milwaukee
Black Hawk	Goodman-Armstrong	Montello	South Shore
Blair-Taylor	Granton Area	Monticello	Southern Door
* Bloomer	Grantsburg	Necedah Area	Southwestern Wisconsin
Boulder Junction J1	Green Lake	Neillsville	Sparta Area
Bowler	Greendale	* Nekoosa	Spencer
Boyceville Community	Greenfield	Neosho J3	* Stanley-Boyd
Bruce	Greenwood	New Auburn	Stockbridge
Butternut	Hamilton	* New Glarus	Stratford
Cambria-Friesland	* Hartland-Lakeside	New Holstein	Sturgeon Bay
Cashton	Herman #22	New Lisbon	Thorp
Cassville	Highland	North Crawford	Tigerton
Cedar Grove-	* Hilbert	* North Fond du Lac	Trevor Grade
Belgium Area	Hillsboro	Northern Ozaukee	* Tri-County
Chetek	Hurley	Norway J7	Turtle Lake
Chilton	Hustisford	Oconomowoc Area	Two Rivers
Clayton	Independence	Oconto Falls	* Unity
Clear Lake	Iola-Scandinavia	* Osceola	Viroqua Area
Clinton Community	Iowa-Grant	Osseo-Fairchild	* Wabeno
* Clintonville	Juda	Owen-Withee	Walworth J1
Cochrane-Fountain City	Kaukauna Area	* Park Falls	Washburn
Colby	Kenosha	Pepin Area	Waterloo
Coleman	Kewaskum	Pittsville	Waukesha
Colfax	Kewaunee	Platteville	Waunakee Community
Cornell	* Kickapoo	Plum City	Wausau
* Crandon	* Kiel	Plymouth	Wausaukee
Crivitz	Kimberly Area	Port Edwards	* Wautoma
Cuba City	Kohler	Portage Community	Wauwatosa
Cudahy	Lac du Flambeau #1	* Potosi	Wauzeka-Steuben
Cumberland	LaCrosse	Prairie du Chien	West Allis
Delavan-Darien	Ladysmith-Hawkins	* Prairie Farm	Weston
Denmark	LaFarge	Princeton	Weyauwega-Fremont
DeSoto Area	* Lake Geneva J1	Racine	Weyerhaeuser Area
Dodgeand	Lancaster Community	Randolph	Wheatland J1
Dodgeville	Laona	* Reedsville	Whitefish Bay
Drummond	Lena	Rhineland	Whitehall
Durand	Linn J4	Rib Lake	Wilmot Grade
Eau Claire Area	Linn J6	Rice Lake Area	Winter
Edgar	Little Chute Area	Richmond	Wisconsin Rapids
* Elcho	Loyal	Rio Community	Wonewoc-Union Center
Elk Mound Area	Manawa	River Ridge	Woodruff J1

\* Denotes districts that implemented new 4K programs in the 2005-06 school year.